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CONSULTATIONS HELD BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION WITH THE BUREAUX OR THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE PRINCIPAL SUBSIDIARY BODIES AND THE WORKING PARTIES REPORTING DIRECTLY TO THE COMMISSION

(Decision B (46), paragraph 4)

Report of the Chairman of the Commission

Introductory remarks

1. In accordance with decision B (47), in particular its operative paragraph 4, the Chairman of the Commission, together with the Executive Secretary, arranged the consultations shown in Table 1 below.

2. Most consultations were held when the representatives of the Bureaux were in Geneva on the occasion of the annual session of their Subsidiary Body or for another meeting. When Subsidiary Bodies did not meet between April and December 1992, special meetings were arranged in order to finalize the present report early in January 1993.

3. For most of the consultations, the Executive Secretary was accompanied by a member of his staff and/or by a representative of the Division concerned.

4. The consultations were held in a constructive spirit which was appreciated by the participants. All of them indicated that such consultations constituted a useful instrument of direct communication between the Subsidiary Bodies and the Commission, and suggested that the experience should be continued in future years.

5. The consultations have all followed the same lines and were based on the same set of questions so as to permit a fair comparison of the indications given by the different Bureaux.

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Table 1

Date	Subsidiary Body	Bureaux C: Chairperson fC: former Chairperson V-C: Vice-Chairperson		Country
14 May	Working Party on Standardization Policies (later referred to as **STAND**)	C: V-C:	Mr S. Warshaw Mr S. Averin	United States Russian Federation
2 June	Senior Economic Advisers to ECE Governments (**EC.AD**)	C: fC: V-C:	Mr F. Levcik Mrs H. Wasilewska Mr J.P. Pagé	Austria Poland France
9 June	Conference of European Statisticians (**CES**)	C:	Mr C. Malaguerra	Switzerland
23 September	Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures (**TRADE/WP.4**)	C WP.4: V-C WP.4 C GE.1: C GE.2: V-C GE.2	Mr V. David Mr T. Blomfeldt Mr R. Walker Mr E. Goffin Mr D. Dima	Czechoslovakia Finland United Kingdom Belgium Romania
25 September	Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Science and Technology (**SC.TECH**)	C: V-C:	Mr G. Kint Mr M. Kepka	Belgium Poland
9 October	Working Party on the Chemical Industry (**CHEM**)	C: V-C:	Mr V. Kamenicky M. V. Evsioukov	United States Russian Federation
19 October	Timber Committee (**TIM**)	C: V-C: V-C:	Mr D. Darr Mr D. Lipman Mr P. Lavarde	United States Russian Federation France
23 October	Working Party on Steel (**STEEL**)	C: fC: V-C:	Mr J. Borak Mr A. Signora Mr U. Meiswinkel	Czechoslovakia France Germany

Date	Subsidiary Body	Bureaux C: Chairperson fC: former Chairperson V-C: Vice-Chairperson		Country
23 October	Working Party on Engineering Industries and Automation (**ENG.AUT**)	C: V-C:	Mr S. Dekany Miss J. Ory	Hungary France
6 November	Inland Transport Committee (**TRANS**)	C: V-C:	Mr P. Danjord Mr D. Valasek	Norway Czechoslovakia
9 November a/	Committee on Energy (**ENERGY**)	C: V-C:	Mr J. Lambotte Mr I. Szergenyi	France Hungary
18 November	Committee on Agriculture (**AGRI**)	C: V-C: V-C:	Mr H. Redl Mr K. Hirsch Mr M. Maco	Austria Germany Czechoslovakia
7 December	Committee on the Development of Trade (**TRADE**)	C: V-C:	Mr J. Kaczurba Mr W. van Ditmars	Poland Netherlands
9 December b/	Working Party on Human Settlements (**HBP**)	C: fC: V-C: V-C: V-C:	Mr J. Tutenuit Miss Zaniewska Miss M. Paumen Mr L. Karlberg Mr P. Gurtner	France Poland United States Sweden Switzerland
16 December	Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Environmental and Water Problems (**ENVWA**)	C:	Mr K. Bärlund	Finland

a/ In the absence of the Chairman, the meeting was chaired by the Executive Secretary; representatives of the Chairman and of the Vice-Chairman of the Commission attended.

b/ In the absence of the Chairman, the meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chairman of the Commission; a representative of the Chairman attended.

6. The main objective of the consultations with the Bureaux of the Subsidiary Bodies was "to identify difficulties in the implementation of their work programmes and facilitate the further streamlining of their activities so as to ensure the most efficient use of existing resources" (decision B (47), para. 4). The efforts of the different Subsidiary Bodies to assist countries in transition were also discussed.

7. The present report synthesizes the views expressed by the representatives of the Bureaux of the Subsidiary Bodies consulted. The hope is that it will provide a general overview of the activities of the "Technical Bodies" of the Commission.

8. Chapter 1 provides an overall synthesis of the consultations held in 1992. Chapter 2 summarizes views expressed by most of the Bureaux (but not necessarily all of them) and focuses on cross-sectoral issues. Chapter 3 presents the comparative advantages of the ECE over other relevant organizations, as they are perceived by the representatives of the Bureaux of the Subsidiary Bodies; this chapter also includes views expressed by some Bureaux, focusing on specific issues.

9. This report presents the views expressed by the Bureaux during the fifteen consultations held in 1992 and does not question the pertinence of the indications given on these occasions. The views expressed by these representatives of the national experts in the different fields of activity of the Commission do not always correspond to the more global appreciation made at the level of the Commission itself. They demonstrate that there are different viewpoints or criteria to evaluate the work performed by the Commission through its Subsidiary Bodies.

10. In summarizing and synthesizing the views expressed by the Bureaux, some minor variatioans have not been reflected in the interests of consistency. Nevertheless, the report reflects the way the various inputs of the Subsidiary Bodies have been received by the Chairman of the Commission.

Chapter 1 : Summary of the Consultation

11. The discussions during the fifteen consultations highlighted the existence of different approaches to the working conditions, the specific needs and the value of the work performed by the Commission through its Subsidiary Bodies. On the one hand there is the technical and field-oriented approach of the Subsidiary Bodies which represent, in the different fields of activities, the views of the national experts of the member States. On the other hand there is the more global and systemic approach of the Commission itself, reflected at its Annual Session as well as at the informal meetings of Permanent Representatives in Geneva. These different approaches are not necessarily contradictory but, if the Commission is to implement a coherent programme of work and ensure the most efficient use of available resources, they would need to be reconciled.

12. Reflecting the common interests of the competent governmental Administrations, and in several fields of activity, also the national private sector, most Bureaux had a high opinion of the results of the work performed in the ECE, when adequate conditions of work are provided. Most of the time,

they consider the work performed to be useful for the strengthening of international cooperation in the region as well as serving the national interests of member States. This appreciation was shown by representatives of west European, north American, central and east European as well as Mediterranean countries. Interestingly enough, the value attributed to the results obtained by the Subsidiary Bodies did not generally differ, regardless of whether the activity was classified as a priority or a non-priority area of activity by decision O (45).

13. The question of whether there was potential or actual duplication of work between the Subsidiary Bodies and other relevant international organizations was posed to all the Bureaux. Most national experts, and Bureaux members, are in an ideal position to address this question since they are also directly involved in the work performed in other relevant governmental or non-governmental organizations. It appeared during the consultations that a considerable effort is made by the ECE to avoid such duplication of effort which could lead to a misuse of limited resources. If such duplication were to develop, national Administrations would certainly propose the discontinuance of the work concerned. In spite of the efforts already made to avoid duplication, some Bureaux felt that a special effort was needed to ensure that the fullest information was available on work under way or foreseen in other organizations, in particular the OECD, when reviewing the programme of work.

14. Concerning the use of resources, the Bureaux indicated that the efforts towards rationalization had to continue. Some specific problems were identified and are described in Chapter 2 (paras. 39-42: Methods of work).

15. Most of the Bureaux, rather than accepting the need for a reduction of their field of activity, have urged that it be strengthened. They explained that a restriction of their mandate and consequently of their resources could lead to a marginalization of their work. This fear of losing even in part the instrument of cooperation provided by the ECE is another indication that the work performed in this framework is highly valued.

16. The difficulties encountered in obtaining adequate resources was systematically addressed. The Bureaux indicated that, if they had inadequate secretariat resources (human, financial and material), the quality of the work performed by the Subsidiary Bodies would fall below the critical point. Under such circumstances, the interest of member States to continue participating in the affected activities would substantially diminish. This critical level seems to be very near in some fields (see Chapter 3), particularly those which had to face additional work due to the rapid modifications in the region and those which had been severely penalized by the reallocation of resources decided in decision O (45) and/or by the decisions on personnel management procedures taken for the United Nations as a whole. The reduction in the number of formal meetings (i.e. with interpretation), leading to informal meetings without interpretation or to the holding of biennial meetings only, was also mentioned by some Bureaux as a very serious obstacle to efficient programme delivery.

17. Furthermore, the Bureaux indicated that if the quality of the work could not be maintained, possibly leading to discontinuance, such activities would

have to be continued in other organizations which would accept to host it (OECD, FAO, UNCTAD, ISO, etc.). The inconvenience of such a move would reside in the fact that within the large Membership of the Commission, all the member States have equal status, whereas this could probably not be ensured in alternative fora and could be detrimental to some Members of the Commission.

18. According to the Bureaux, it could certainly be said that the level of participation in the work of the Commission depends to a large extent on the quality and relevance of the elements included in the programme of work performed and the quality and quantity of the service provided by the Organization to the national experts. The level of participation and representation will also influence the quality and utility of the work performed.

19. The Bureaux all noted that the end of the "bloc" confrontation had transformed the very nature of the cooperation in the region. The elements of the programme of work, jointly adopted, now reflected areas where work was done without any ideological component but in the common and general interest. This new atmosphere of cooperation had led most Subsidiary Bodies to adapt their working methods. The new political developments in the region had radically and positively modified the climate for the "technical" cooperation performed by the Subsidiary Bodies. It would seem logical, therefore, that the more "political" Commission acknowledge this evolution by taking duly into account the inputs given by the national experts of the member States participating in the different Subsidiary Bodies. More efficient ways to ensure the necessary communication between the "technical" and the "political" levels of the Commission would help the latter to give guidance to its Subsidiary Bodies, implement its own mandate, and ensure provision of adequate means for the work of its Subsidiary Bodies.

Chapter 2 : Cross-sectoral issues

20. The following views were expressed by the representatives of most of the Subsidiary Bodies. They indicate common concerns and similar perceptions of the present situation at the level of the Subsidiary Bodies. They also address cross-sectoral issues which will, most probably, have to be dealt with at the level of the Commission, in close cooperation with the Subsidiary Bodies concerned.

Interest and involvement of member States in the activities of the Subsidiary Bodies

21. Although the large membership of the Commission, together with the equal status of its member States, are always considered as one of the key comparative advantages of the UN/ECE when compared with other organizations, e.g. OECD, FAO, the participation of national experts in the different activities of the Subsidiary Bodies is unequal. The lack of participation frequently diminishes the theoretical comparative advantage of the large membership.

22. Among the reasons which could explain the relative lack of participation of some members, the following were mentioned repeatedly:

(a) financial problems for some countries to cover the travel costs of their experts to meetings held in Geneva, in particular for countries in transition, newly independent States and distant countries;

(b) lack of a Permanent Mission in Geneva for some countries (e.g. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova);

(c) technical difficulties encountered by the secretariat in contacting the relevant authorities of some countries, in particular of the newly independent States;

(d) different ranking, in the national lists of priorities, given to activities in the framework of the UN/ECE. Some activities (transport, environment, statistics, steel, agriculture, timber, energy, chemicals ...) were considered by most member States as highly interesting. On the other hand, the relatively unequal participation of national experts in other fields of activity (the Senior Economic Advisers constitute one example) may illustrate a relatively lower interest from the membership of the Commission in general. Nevertheless, most, if not all, activities of the Commission were still considered to be very important from the point of view of the national experts who actively participated.

23. It is also to be noted that Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kirghizstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have never been represented in a meeting held in Geneva under the auspices of the ECE since 5 October 1992 when the Commission welcomed their immediate participation in its activities.

Interest and involvement of the private sector

24. The participation and the involvement of representatives of the private sectors (Associations, private companies) in activities held in the framework of the Commission had recently increased. There was now a tendency to include representatives of industry in national delegations. Nevertheless, this practice depended to a large extent on national structures and on the issues dealt with by the different Subsidiary Bodies.

25. In fields such as timber, chemical industry and steel, for example, the Subsidiary Bodies constitute the only international fora where representatives of the private sector (mainly the producers) can collect comprehensive information on export markets and can meet with governmental representatives of countries in transition to a market economy. The mixed composition of many delegations (governmental and private sector) constitutes one of the characteristics of the ECE in many fields.

26. Traditionally, some of the UN/ECE activities were closely connected with the "East-West" trade in industrial or semi-industrial products as well as raw materials and their accession to new markets. This type of activity, including dissemination of statistical trade data, identification of trade partners and creation of business opportunities, had recently been affected to a large extent by the political and economic reforms undertaken in central and eastern Europe. The end of the cold war had also resulted in the opening of existing fora to new partners and the creation of new regional institutions (among them some financial institutions such as the EBRD). This development

had contributed to the strengthening of relations between governments and private circles in the countries of central and eastern Europe which were in transition to a market economy, on the one hand, and countries from western Europe and north America on the other. This evolution of the instruments of cooperation in the region tended also to diminish the relative importance of the UN/ECE which was no longer the only bridge between the east and the west of the region. This situation could open the door for potential duplication of work but could also give a new impetus to the Commission. For this reason, the identification and periodical re-evaluation of the comparative advantages of the different organizations active in the region remained vital, given the limited resources available.

Cooperation between ECE Divisions

27. The cooperation between the different Subsidiary Bodies was, in general, only ensured by the secretariat, most of the time on an ad hoc basis.

28. The development of direct contacts between national experts in different fields would be, according to representatives of many Bureaux, an effective tool to support efforts undertaken to avoid intra-ECE duplication of work. The few cross-sectoral Joint Working Groups (environment and economics for example) constituted in this context interesting means of ensuring cross-sectoral cooperation which could serve as examples. The Bureaux had indicated their interest in finding ways to strengthen the cooperation between each other by direct contacts, and not only through the secretariat.

29. Coordination between the different activities at the technical level was still left to a large extent to the secretariat and the national administrations, but there still seemed to be room for significant improvements.

Cooperation between the Subsidiary Bodies and other relevant international organizations

30. Coordination between the Subsidiary Bodies of the Commission and the other relevant international organizations is ensured by the following means:

(a) inter-secretariat coordination, e.g. in the trade facilitation field, between the ECE Trade Division, the ISO, the IEC and the CCITT, and in the statistical field between the Conference of European Statisticians, the OECD and EUROSTAT (Joint Programme Review);

(b) participation by the same national experts in meetings of different organizations;

(c) active participation or attendance as observers of representatives of other relevant international organizations in the meetings of the UN/ECE (OECD, IMF, ISO, etc.) and vice versa;

(d) Joint Working Groups, e.g. the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training or the Joint FAO/ECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics.

31. Since some countries which are members of the UN/ECE are not members of other relevant organizations (OECD, FAO for example), activities in the framework of the UN/ECE constitute, in some cases, the only "bridge" to other relevant organizations. Should the UN/ECE cease to be active in such fields, the only alternative for those countries would be to join the other organizations. At the present time, and for varying reasons, this is not possible or not desired by some countries and/or the organizations.

Assistance to economies in transition

32. In addition to the regular activities contained in their programme of work, which have already a significant and positive impact for the countries which are in transition to a market economy, all the Subsidiary Bodies have included in their programme of work specific activities particularly designed to assist the transition process, in implementation of the Commission's decisions at its forty-fifth and subsequent sessions.

33. According to decision O (45), a particular accent has been put on the organization of workshops. This method of work was unanimously considered by the Bureaux to be a very useful, flexible and pragmatic instrument of cooperation. Nevertheless, the question of the financing of such activities was raised on many occasions. According to the representatives of most Bureaux, the approach pursued by the ECE was based on the needs indicated by countries hosting workshops, particularly countries in transition. This flexible and pragmatic approach might explain the difficulties to integrate the different workshops into a global concept.

34. In this context the Senior Economic Advisers had not felt themselves to be competent to undertake the mandate given them in decisions D (45) and B (46), namely to coordinate the programme of workshops. A global evaluation of the programme of workshops might be difficult to achieve but it would be important that the effort be made.

Sustainable development

35. Most Subsidiary Bodies had strengthened their activities in order to integrate in their programme of work activities related to the strengthening of the principle of sustainable development.

Dissemination of the results of the activities of the Subsidiary Bodies

36. Considering the high value most member States attached to the results of the important work done under the auspices of the UN/ECE, it was felt necessary, by most of the Bureaux, to ensure a well targeted, extensive and low cost dissemination of such results.

37. Nevertheless, for some Bureaux, the results of specific activities seemed to have lost much of their relevance by the time they were disseminated. This could constitute wasted efforts and an inefficient use of available resources. The Conference of European Statisticians had undertaken to analyse the statistical publications of the ECE. Other Subsidiary Bodies had also started a systematic evaluation of their non-statistical publications. Most Bureaux considered this to be a first step in the right direction.

38. For the Bureaux, this issue constituted an area for common reflection and cooperation where a cross-sectoral approach should be developed between the Bureaux.

Methods of work

39. In accordance with decision O (45), the duration of the meetings of some Subsidiary Bodies had been reduced, which had forced them to adapt and sometimes reduce their programme of work. Nevertheless, several Bodies had chosen to reduce only minimally their programme of work or had even faced an increase of work. The combination of these elements had resulted in an increasing resort to informal meetings, generally held in English, without interpretation. This practice was considered to be detrimental to the work of the Bodies concerned.

40. Also in accordance with decision O (45), some Subsidiary Bodies had had to hold less meetings during the year and, in some cases, meet only every two years. In view of the rapid developments occurring in the region, the Bureaux concerned felt that it was particularly difficult, if not impossible, to perform efficient work under such conditions.

41. Taking into account the large number of meetings held both in the framework of the UN/ECE and in other organizations, and the fact that national delegates often cover the activities of different organizations, with resulting high travel costs, some Bureaux highlighted the need for better coordination between the calendars of meetings of related organizations and, whenever possible, the organization of back-to-back UN/ECE meetings.

42. The Bureaux were also highly interested in ensuring a more active communication with the Commission itself. In this context, they felt that the consultations held in accordance with decision B (47), paragraph 4, constituted a useful and interesting mechanism which should be continued. The consultation procedure could be adapted or extended so that the Permanent Representations in Geneva could benefit, more directly and in an extensive way, from the information and views expressed during the consultations between the Chairman of the Commission and the Bureaux. The informal and direct character of the talks should nevertheless be preserved.

Role of the Bureaux

43. Most of the Bureaux indicated that their role had to be strengthened so as to ensure a coherent action in the period between the meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies and to offer more flexibility so as to be able to respond to the rapid changes in the region. Different approaches had been experimented with:

(a) enlargement of the Bureau and/or meetings of the Bureaux between the ordinary sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies;

(b) nomination of coordinators and rapporteurs, in charge of specific elements of the programme of work, meeting between the ordinary sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies.

44. Joint Meetings of Bureaux were also mentioned as a means to ensure a more coherent approach to cross-sectoral issues.

Resources available to the Subsidiary Bodies

45. In addressing this question, the representatives of the Bureaux of the different Subsidiary Bodies indicated that it had to be considered in the light of the objectives identified and incorporated in the programme of work of the Commission and its Subsidiary Bodies and the work accomplished in other organizations.

46. The needed resources, human, financial and material, had to be considered in correlation with the activities to be performed by the secretariat and/or by the experts. Most of them reflected basic needs while some of them differed according to the programme of work of each Subsidiary Body.

47. In some cases, additional human resources were provided by other organizations working in cooperation with the UN/ECE or even by member States. In one case (steel) an extra-budgetary contribution had even been granted by Japan.

48. In some cases the lack of resources, resulting from the implementation of decision O (45) and/or the decisions on resource policy for the United Nations as a whole, had hindered the normal servicing performed by the secretariat. In some fields of activity, this situation has resulted in delays in the preparation of basic documents, postponements or freezing of elements in the programme of work. The major problems encountered by the Conference of European Statisticians illustrated the dangers of such a situation.

Chapter 3 : Comparative advantages and specific problems

49. This Chapter addresses mainly the complex issue of potential duplication of work between the ECE and governmental and/or non-governmental organizations active in the region in fields similar to those covered by the Subsidiary Bodies. It reflects the perception of the issue by the concerned Bureaux, which are often composed of experts also participating in the work of other relevant organizations.

50. The wide membership of the ECE in which all members have equal status constitutes a horizontal advantage, in comparison with other organizations, which was regularly highlighted by the Bureaux. This advantage is strengthened when virtually all member States participate in the work of the Commission and its Subsidiary Bodies.

Working Party on Standardization Policies

51. The Working Party is the only international forum where questions related to standardization policies are addressed, and where representatives of Governments can exchange views and information on standardization policies. This makes it a unique forum, with no apparent alternative at present. In order to work efficiently, it needs to be regularly informed and to cooperate closely with governmental and non-governmental "standards-setting" organizations, such as ISO, CCITT, IEC, CEN, CENELEC. There is a very clear

distinction between the work of the Working Party and the other standards-setting organizations. Cooperation is ensured through their secretariats and by the active participation of representatives of the various organizations in the sessions of the Working Party. The fact that many national experts participate in the work of the other organizations diminishes the risk of duplication of efforts.

Senior Economic Advisers to ECE Governments

52. The work of this Subsidiary Body covers two broad categories:

53. The first category groups the yearly economic analysis performed independently by the Division for Economic Analysis and Projections. The Bureau of the Senior Economic Advisers highlighted the need to ensure the independence of the secretariat in the elaboration of the "Economic Survey for Europe" and the "Economic Bulletin" but indicated that due consideration should be given to reflecting the needs of member countries in the structure of the "Survey". This did not mean that the substance should be influenced by the member countries. The Bureau recognized that similar studies existed already "on the market", but they stressed the usefulness of a certain "competition" between different organizations in analysing the evolution of the economic situation in the region. In this context, they emphasized that the membership of the Commission and the equal status of its members were to be borne in mind. The increasing difficulties encountered by the secretariat in covering a region characterized by a substantial increase in the number sovereign States were mentioned in connection with resource difficulties.

54. The second category groups activities essentially consisting of exchanges of views and experience relating to global economic policies and specific issues. The supportive role of the secretariat has also been recognized. In this category, in which other organizations are also active (OECD, EBRD, IMF, World Bank, etc.), the relatively low involvement of many member States may indicate that the comparative advantage of the ECE has diminished and did not reflect a priority for the experts of these States. The Bureau of the Senior Economic Advisers has indicated that the multinational and medium- and long-term analysis should be pursued, in spite of the difficulties of the exercise.

55. Some issues dealt with by the Senior Economic Advisers, such as privatization, are also dealt with, to a certain extent, by the Commission itself, during its annual session, and e.g. by the Committee on the Development of Trade through its Working Party on International Contract Practices in Industry. A need for close coordination is obvious. Specific elements of privatization are also dealt with by other Subsidiary Bodies (steel, chemical industry, etc.).

Conference of European Statisticians

56. The Conference of European Statisticians groups the Directors of the National Statistical Offices of the region. It works closely with other regional statistical organizations such as EUROSTAT or the OECD and is part of the United Nations statistical network. It is an indispensable instrument for the implementation of the mandate of the Commission in the essential role of collection, treatment and dissemination of statistical data. The

participation of Directors of National Statistical Offices in the work of the Conference indicates the high value placed by the member States on this organization for the coordination of national statistical policies in the region.

57. Adequate secretariat support had not been ensured for a relatively long period, leading to postponement of important activities. The resource situation had recently improved which should permit the Conference to remain an important part of the Commission's machinery despite the increase of work resulting from the recent changes in the region and the increasing membership.

58. To ensure more flexibility between the annual sessions of the Conference, the Bureau has been enlarged and its role strengthened. A systematic evaluation of the impact of ECE statistical publications is being conducted in cooperation with the relevant Subsidiary Bodies.

59. To avoid duplication of efforts, an improvement in the cooperation with the OECD is necessary and will depend to a large extent on the flexibility of the OECD itself.

Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures (WP.4) (EDIFACT)

60. Due to the high technicality of the work of the Committee on the Development of Trade in the field of trade facilitation, a special consultation was arranged with the Bureaux of the WP.4 and its two Groups of Experts.

61. The framework offered by the WP.4 and the Group of Experts is particular in several ways. It constitutes a forum where users of trade facilitation standards (paper and EDI) can meet with representatives of national administrations and standard setting organizations to develop modern facilitation techniques. The geographical scope of its work in the field of EDI extends beyond the ECE region since its structure includes five regional secretariats (Pan American EDIFACT Board, Western European EDIFACT Board, Eastern European EDIFACT Board, Australia/New Zealand EDIFACT Board and Asia EDIFACT Board). Through this decentralized structure, regional Boards, member States and/or professional users make extensive inputs as well as important financial investments to the work finalized in the framework of the Commission.

62. Communication and cooperation with other relevant organizations are ensured by the participation of representatives in the respective meetings organized during the year. Furthermore, an inter-secretariat standing group (ISO, ECE, CCITT, IEC) ensures the necessary coordination between the secretariats. A similar body has been created recently between ECE, UNCTAD and ITC so as to avoid potential duplication, particularly with the UNCTAD present and future activities in this field (FALPRO, Asycuda, Trade Efficiency 2000, Trade Points).

63. The importance of action to promote awareness of modern facilitation techniques has been highlighted, particularly in the context of assistance to countries in transition. Different projects, requiring adequate financial

support, are under preparation to strengthen these efforts (technical assistance, training, etc.). The Bureaux also considered that the work of ECE should be complemented by the work of bodies such as the Customs Cooperation Council to help countries in transition. Cooperation with the EBRD is also under way.

64. Although the provision of adequate human resources had been seriously delayed in the recent past, the Bureau considered that staff resources now seemed to be sufficient but that the secretariat was short of the necessary equipment and travel funds.

Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Science and Technology

65. The recent political transformation in the region had led to a change in the perception of the role of this Subsidiary Body, by delegations both from the west and from the economies in transition. More emphasis was being placed on science and technology policy and on the exchange of experience.

66. The OECD Committee on Scientific and Technological Policy also dealt with science and technology policy. The Bureau of the Senior Advisers indicated that the ECE approach reviewed the principal changes taking place over a four year period whereas the in-d pth study of the OECD took more time. This faster adaptation to changes and the wider coverage, due to its larger membership, constitutes the main advantages of the ECE body. The Bureau underlined the cooperation between the secretariats of the two organizations, particularly with respect to the realization of science and technology indicators by the OECD for the economies in transition. The Senior Advisers had developed a specific activity in the inventory of safety guidelines in biotechnology.

67. The Bureau underlined the effects of the very limited time allowed to them to conduct their work and drew attention to the non-participation of many countries, including countries in transition.

Working Party on the Chemical Industry

68. The Working Party brings together representatives of Governments and industry (mainly represented by large associations of private industry such as the Chemical Industry Council - CEFIC). This configuration is unique at the level of the region and constitutes an important asset for the achievement of sustainable industrial development, the chemical industry being one of the major components to which special attention needed to be paid in this context. The fact that the "High-level Meeting on Sustainable Development in the Chemical Industry", held in Warsaw in March 1992, was initiated and prepared by the Working Party illustrated its importance for participants.

69. Cooperation with the private sector is ensured by the mixed composition of many national delegations and by the active participation of representatives of associations such as the CEFIC. The Bureau indicated that the quality of the statistical information included in the "Annual Review of the Chemical Industry" had partly motivated the OECD to discontinue publishing its own review in 1983.

70. Some activities of the Working Party, including issues related to the creation of market infrastructures, restructuring of the chemical sector in countries in transition, sustainable development and issues related to privatization, were closely linked with activities undertaken by other Subsidiary Bodies such as the Senior Economic Advisers, the Senior Advisers on Environmental and Water Problems or the Committee on the Development of Trade. The Bureau indicated that intra-ECE cooperation could be strengthened to benefit from synergies.

Timber Committee

71. The FAO European Forestry Commission and the IUFRO (lead organization in international research of the timber sector) are also active in the field of timber. They participate in the work of the Timber Committee.

72. The approach chosen by the Timber Committee is more oriented to the forestry products, and more market oriented than the work conducted in the FAO. Furthermore, arrangements with FAO, although complex, practically guarantee that there is no duplication. The coordination of work is also facilitated by the existence of Joint Working Groups (FAO/ECE and FAO/ECE/ILO). For the countries members of the Commission but not members of the FAO (Russian Federation, Belarus, Ukraine and some other CIS countries), the Timber Committee operates a "bridging-function" with the FAO, which is also in the interest of the FAO (for collection of statistical data for example).

Working Party on Steel

73. The Working Party is the oldest and most universal body in the steel sector, works jointly with governmental and industry representatives, brings together steel-producing countries from all over the world (in particular Europe, North America, Latin America, Japan, Middle East) and undertakes activities which reflect the priorities of both the steel producers and their Governments. The link between governmental and industrial representatives constituted by the Working Party is considered, by the Bureau, to be a major contribution by the Commission to the efforts made in the region and beyond to strengthen economic cooperation.

74. The IISI (International Iron and Steel Institute) is also active in the field of steel but is composed of steel producers only. The OECD has chosen a political approach and is composed of civil servants only. IISI, OECD as well as the Commission of the EC participate in the Working Party. A special effort by OECD and ECE to ensure complementarity without duplication in the collection of statistical data is particularly important.

75. The Bureau indicated that the importance of the ECE as a forum to exchange information had been illustrated by the confidence put by the World Bank in the Working Party to pilot the review of ironworks of countries in transition, in cooperation with the IISI and the EBRD, and by the willingness of the Japanese industry to support financially a highly qualified trainee for a period of two years.

Working Party on Engineering Industries and Automation

76. Despite the great need for assistance expressed by the countries in transition, the Bureau felt it would be extremely difficult for this Subsidiary Body to fulfil entirely its mandate and the ambitious programme of work.

77. One of the reasons was the magnitude and diversity of the engineering industries and automation in the economic activity of the countries of the region. This meant that, in deciding on its programme of work, the Working Party needed to achieve a judicious balance between the interests of western countries (upgrading of standards requirements and creation of business opportunities) and the urgent needs of the countries in transition (restructuring, privatization, training, technological innovation, etc.). In this context, the "Annual Review of Engineering Industries and Automation" provided Governments and industries with a useful overview of developments and short-term trends and a basis for comparing national performance. The mixed composition of the national delegations also constituted a unique opportunity to create business contacts between the private and the governmental interests represented in the Working Party.

78. The Bureau highlighted the fact that, if there was to be a viable programme, the Working Party should meet every year. The two-year cycle of meetings, resulting from decision O (45) would ultimately lead to the demise of the Working Party.

Inland Transport Committee

79. With regard to the activities carried out in other international organizations, the Bureau indicated that the Governments participating in the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) had agreed that ECMT should be a forum for transport policy discussions, while the technical and legal work should be carried out by the ECE. In this division of labour, ECE would provide ECMT with information concerning the progress of ECE's work and also transform ECMT political decisions into concrete and practical technical results and, as far as possible, into binding legal instruments. The Bureau considered therefore that the risk of duplication between ECMT and ECE was minimal. The active involvement of the secretariat and most member States of the ECE in the first Pan-European Transport Conference at ministerial level in 1991 and in the preparation of the second Conference in 1993 made the Bureau confident that the necessary coordination existed between the relevant regional organizations.

80. As a consequence of the high value attributed by the member States to the work of the Committee, including the initiation and follow-up of international agreements, such as the European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), and the conduct of regional projects, such as the Trans-European North-South Motorway Project and the Trans-European Railway Project, the Bureau was confident that the necessary resources, human and financial, could be found through regular or extraordinary contributions and that the present difficult situation would be solved.

Committee on Energy

81. The Bureau stressed the importance of the cooperation in the energy sector in connection with the two general orientations of the Commission, namely assistance to economies in transition and achievement of sustainable development. The activities in the different fields (gas, electric power, coal, energy efficiency) were considered by the experts to be getting better but still not widely enough known.

82. The innovative approach developed through the "Energy Efficiency 2000" and the "Global Energy Efficiency 21 - an interregional Approach" Projects were considered to be important contributions to the recently strengthened efforts to cope with both the development challenges, including in countries in transition, and the environmental challenges. The need for complementarity with other organizations or processes, such as the European Energy Charter, the G-24 Working Group on Energy and the IAEA, were highlighted.

83. The shortage of resources allocated for this activity was criticized by the Bureau which highlighted the quality of the professional staff offering support to the Committee. The Committee had obtained extra-budgetary contributions as the only way to support the activities in the field of energy efficiency.

Committee on Agriculture

84. The Bureau presented the adaptation of the priorities and programme of work of the Committee which had resulted from decision O (45) and from the changing climate for cooperation in the region. The substantial structural changes illustrated the flexibility shown by some bodies in adapting their activities to new realities.

85. The Bureau indicated that the ECE and OECD approaches were different. Whereas OECD worked mainly on policy aspects (integration of agricultural and environmental policies), the Committee worked mainly on the economic, technical legal and regulatory measures deriving from the overall policies, as well as on their practical implementation.

86. Most of the Committee's activities are conducted jointly with the FAO. The Bureau referred to the ad hoc Working Group on ECE/FAO cooperation in the field of agriculture, held in Berlin in 1990. It was on the double basis of the findings of this meeting, and of decision O (45) that the Committee reviewed its terms of reference and priorities. The Bureau explained that the replacement of two previous Working Parties by two joint ECE/FAO Bodies means, among others: (a) sharing of tasks to service the Working Parties (e.g. new P-3 post in the ECE Regional Office for Europe in Rome for environmental activities); (b) joint elaboration of the terms of reference. The opportunity thus created to establish contacts and cooperation between FAO on the one hand, and ECE's non-FAO members on the other, was stressed. Joint meetings were held between the Bureau of the Committee and the Executive Committee (a kind of enlarged Bureau) of the FAO European Commission on Agriculture.

87. The Bureau indicated that the allocation by decision O (45) of 4 half-days of official meeting every 18 months to each Working Party was quite

insufficient to implement a viable programme of work. This was a clear example of a decision conflicting with the realistic and efficient implementation of a programme.

Committee on the Development of Trade

88. The programme of work of the Committee is composed of two main elements. The first, "Trade facilitation" is considered by the Commission to be a priority area of activity identified by decision O (45). The other, "Trade and trade related issues", is not. Due to the technicalities of the trade facilitation activities, a special consultation was arranged with the Bureaux of the WP.4 and its groups of experts (see the specific reporting, paras. 60 to 64).

89. Potential synergies between the work conducted by the Committee and by most of the other Subsidiary Bodies have been identified. It seems, nevertheless, that the Committee needs to find a new place in the Commission in order effectively to fulfil its important mandate. The recent transformations in the region as well as the resource difficulties encountered by the secretariat to enable it fully to assist the Committee, particularly in the elaboration and transmission of papers for the annual session of the Committee, constituted elements of preoccupation for the Bureau.

Committee on Human Settlements

90. The Bureau indicated that the Committee had recently re-evaluated and restructured its work, and reduced the number of its programme elements from 17 to 9. The structure of the work was also modified to respond to the current needs of member countries. The work now focused more on assistance to countries in transition and aspects related to sustainable human settlements developments where new ecological principles must be taken into account. The enlargement of the Bureau should also strengthen its coordinating role.

91. Being the only regional intergovernmental organization focusing on important housing issues, the Committee was described by the Bureau as an important contact network giving access to the experience of all the countries represented and thus improving the quality of the work in particular countries or groups of countries. The "Compendium of Building Regulations" and the "Housing Policy Guidelines" were particularly mentioned in this context.

Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Environmental and Water Problems

92. The strengthened Bureau underlined the efforts of the Senior Advisers to respond efficiently to the dramatic changes occurring in the region, to define their pan-European role in the new regional context, to become more policy oriented, to strive towards a framework of strategic planning and management, to strengthen cooperation with other Principal Subsidiary Bodies and other international organizations active in the region on environmental protection, rational use of natural resources and sustainable development, and to prepare themselves for follow-up action to the Rio and Lucerne Conferences.

93. The Bureau highlighted the close cooperation with the Senior Economic Advisers through a Joint Working Group and indicated that the Senior Advisers

on Environment were examining the implications at the regional level of the outcome of UNCED. They expected to propose concrete action to the Commission in this respect. Indications were given of the considerable contribution being made to the Lucerne Conference "Environment for Europe", in cooperation with other regional organizations. The Bureau stressed that the follow-up to this pan-European process should be taken up by already existing regional or sub-regional mechanisms.

94. The Bureau qualified the Subsidiary Body as the only regional mechanism striving towards convergence of environmental policies of west, central and east European and North American countries, on the basis of an equal footing.

95. Since 30% of the resources allocated to service the Senior Advisers and the three new conventions were still frozen, the programme of work had not been fully implemented during 1992. A number of projects had been postponed and new projects were put on a waiting list until the resource situation was normalized.

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(Provisional Agenda item 5(a))

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

Note prepared by the secretariat

1. This note has been prepared in accordance with the report of the Working Group set up by the Ad Hoc Informal Meeting of the Commission on 5 October 1992 for the strengthening of the annual session of the Commission. The present text has been revised to reflect the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Informal Meeting of 24 January and meetings held since that date. It contains the highlights and difficulties encountered in implementing the programme of work, as well as other relevant issues of the work of the Commission's subsidiary bodies since the forty-seventh session, and draws attention to those matters which require the consideration, action or decision of the Commission. This note is not intended to duplicate the reports of the Principal Subsidiary Bodies, to which delegations should refer for greater detail about matters contained herein.

2. The Summary Document is intended to assist delegations in their review of the ECE programme of work and to guide them to the difficulties and the points of excellence and innovation in the programme of work, on which they will need to focus attention and give the subsidiary bodies and the secretariat guidance for the coming year. As such the Document is not meant to repeat in detail what can be found in the reports of the PSBs.

3. While in most cases the programme of work is synonymous with the work of the PSBs, attention must also be given to programme activities which are not within the purview of a PSB, such as the secretariat's independent research publications, regional preparatory conferences organized in response to General Assembly resolutions (sub-programme 00) as well as the identification of cross-sectoral activities which involve more than one PSB.

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POLICY AND COORDINATION OF THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION (Sub-programme 0)

4. At the Special Session convened on 5 October 1992 the Commission adopted resolution 1 (1992-S) - Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields: Strengthening the role and functions of the regional commissions, particularly the Economic Commission for Europe - in response to General Assembly resolution 46/235. The resolution drew the Assembly's attention to the comparative advantages of the ECE, its contribution to the process of revitalization and restructuring of the United Nations, and the necessity to strengthen its cooperation and coordination of work with other international organizations and institutions. It stressed the need for the timely provision of resources for ECE and the importance of a speedy and effective implementation of the ECE programme in favour of the countries in transition. It recommended to the Assembly that adequate budgetary and financial provision be made to enable ECE to discharge its responsibilities; that a more effective distribution of responsibilities and a better balance between Headquarters departments and ECE be achieved; that the results of ECE's work be made available to the UN global programmes; and that its operational activities also benefit the developing countries of other regions.

5. The Commission has continued to implement the provisions of decision O (45) - The activities of the Economic Commission for Europe - as indicated in the elements set out below for the various sub-programmes of the Commission's programme of work. The provisions of the decision continue to govern the prioritization of the Commission's work, the use of resources, its structure and methods of work and its calendar of meetings, as well as its activities designed to assist the countries of the region which are in transition to a market economy.

6. In implementation of decision B (47), the Executive Secretary submitted the decision to the Secretary-General and has continued to pursue the objectives set by the decision for the appointment of staff to fill vacancies in the priority areas of the Commission's work. A number of exceptions have been granted by the Department of Administration and Management to the temporary suspension of recruitment to permit the appointment of staff to the ECE. The new procedures established in October 1992 for a central review of vacancies have to date resulted in the agreement by Headquarters that all ECE vacancies in 1992 will remain in the ECE staffing-table. (See document E/ECE/1274.)

7. In implementation of the provisions of decisions O (45), D (45) and B (46) the Commission has continued to organize activities designed to assist the countries of the region which are in transition to a market economy. In particular the ECE programme of workshops has been developed further, and more than 70 workshops have been held mainly in the transition countries and on topics which they themselves have proposed. In order to assist those countries to overcome the difficulties which they face in financing their participation in the workshops a trust fund has been set up to receive contributions from member Governments, donor organizations and institutions and the private sector. (See document E/ECE/1272.)

8. The question of ensuring the participation of representatives of transition countries, particularly the new member States of the Commission, in the activities of the ECE is of great significance. Delegations participating in the sessions of virtually all PSBs have expressed concern that those countries are often unable to afford to participate in the work of the Commission for lack of hard currency. There have been repeated calls for a solution to this problem. In its resolution 1 (1992-S) referred to above the Commission expressed its conviction that there was a necessity to ensure, in response to ECOSOC decision 1992/43, that all ECE member States could participate fully and effectively in the work of the Commission.

9. In response to Commission decisions O (45) and B (46), more than 80% of the time of the Division for Economic Analysis and Projections (DEAP) is now devoted to the analysis of the transition economies and related policy issues. This new emphasis is reflected in the Economic Survey of Europe and the Economic Bulletin for Europe, both of which contain an increased coverage of economic and policy developments in the transition economies. The inclusion in both these publications of an opening chapter focused on major policy issues, including western policies in support of the transition process, has been welcomed by member Governments and has provided a focus for discussion of current issues at the Senior Economic Advisers, the Committee on the Development of Trade and at the annual sessions of the Commission itself. For the past three years these publications have also contained a number of analyses of special topics concerning the transition process: for example, property rights and privatization, east-west migration, the effects of German re-unification and the collapse of intra-CMEA trade. The economic analysis prepared for these two publications has also been used directly by other ECE divisions in the preparation of their annual reports and other publications for their respective Principal Subsidiary Bodies.

10. The ECE work in the area of economic analysis has considerably benefited from a much closer cooperation between the secretariat and the Senior Economic Advisers than had existed in the past. Thanks to the new timing of the annual session (late May or early June rather than February), the Senior Economic Advisers are now regularly supplied with the main findings of the Survey in due time. At the same time they have an opportunity to suggest items that should be highlighted in subsequent issues of the publication. They also receive a similar condensed overview of major developments and policy issues based on the Economic Bulletin for Europe, which helps their own work and keeps them abreast of ECE analysis between the annual sessions.

11. The DEAP faces considerable difficulty in meeting the Commission's request for "high quality observation and analysis" of the transition economies (decision B (46)). The number of transition economies which need to be analysed has risen from 8 (before 1989) to 18, and is expected to increase further. This has meant a commensurate increase not only in the required volume of economic analysis but also in the tasks of collecting and processing the necessary statistical data. The secretariat has increased its contacts with statistical offices in the transition countries, has tried to improve statistical cooperation with other international organizations, and has set up a joint statistical unit, based on DEAP and the Statistical Division, to meet the increased demands for the collection and analysis of statistical data, as called for in decision O (45). Nevertheless, despite some progress in these

directions, available resources of personnel, equipment and funds for travel and consultancies are less than adequate to respond effectively to the new situation.

12. The ECE, jointly with the Council of Europe and UNFPA, is organizing the European Population Conference which will be held in Geneva from 23-26 March 1993. The Conference is in preparation for the International Conference on Population and Development convened by the General Assembly in 1994. The agenda and programme for the European Conference, as well as the draft recommendations to be adopted at the meeting, have been circulated to all ECE member Governments. The Preparatory Meeting held in Strasbourg in November 1992 took note of the need to assist countries in transition, especially new member States, to participate in the Conference. Accordingly the secretariat has addressed an appeal to other ECE members to contribute funds for this purpose.

13. The Commission may also wish to take into account a number of other resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session as set out in document E/ECE/1279.

ENVIRONMENT (Sub-programme 1)

14. The sixth session of the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Environmental and Water Problems was held in Geneva from 16 to 19 March 1993. The report of the session is contained in document ECE/ENVWA/29. The session was attended by 32 ECE member countries of which 14 were countries in transition.

15. The Senior Advisers adopted their contribution to the Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Lucerne, Switzerland, 28-30 April 1992) as contained in document ECE/ENVWA/30. They also elaborated proposals for inclusion in the Ministerial declaration (ECE/ENVWA/30/Add.1) for submission to the Expert Group for the preparation of the Conference.

16. The Senior Advisers examined progress made in the interim implementation of the Conventions on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, and Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, pursuant to the decisions taken by the Commission (E (47)) and the Senior Advisers (resolution adopted in 1993 and decision B(5)).

17. With regard to the follow-up to UNCED, the Senior Advisers thanked the secretariat for the preparation of document ENVWA/R.69 and decided to submit it to the Commission recommending that all PSBs be invited to consider proposals contained therein of relevance to their work programmes and to elaborate proposals for action for consideration by the Commission at its forty-ninth session; and requested the Bureau of the Senior Advisers to elaborate a proposal on priorities and possible detailed action to be taken by the Senior Advisers themselves on the basis of relevant provisions contained in document ENVWA/R.69 and taking into account the results of the Lucerne Ministerial Conference, for consideration at a consultation of heads of delegations to be convened in Autumn 1993.

18. The delegation of Sweden stressed the importance of the convening of a regional conference on transport and the environment under the auspices of ECE and with the support of the Senior Advisers. The Senior Advisers supported this proposal, provided the Commission takes concrete steps towards the holding of the conference, after having studied its feasibility. They also emphasized the need for organizing such a conference on a multidisciplinary basis in close cooperation between the Senior Advisers, the Inland Transport Committee and the Committee on Energy.

19. The Senior Advisers took note of the progress made in the preparations for the Seminar on Low-waste Technology and Environmentally Sound Products (Warsaw, Poland, 24-28 May 1993) and decided to convene in 1994 an ad hoc meeting in Austria, in cooperation with OECD, to review progress in the application of OECD systems and practices on management of chemicals in the ECE countries non-members of OECD. They also took note with satisfaction of the launching of the ECE/UNEP activities on Strengthening Environmental Capabilities in Eastern and Central European Countries, and adopted guidelines on the ecosystem approach in water management and policy recommendations on water-quality criteria and objectives. Wide dissemination of documents was decided on "Protection of Water Resources and Aquatic Ecosystems", "Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements in Europe and North America on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Waters" and "Bilateral and Multilateral Financial Cooperation in the ECE Region of relevance to Environmental Protection".

20. The Senior Advisers requested the Bureau, with the assistance of the secretariat, to prepare a proposal on possible action on environmental performance reviews in the light of the results of the Lucerne Ministerial Conference, for consideration by the consultation of the heads of delegation in autumn 1993.

21. As regards the role of the Senior Advisers in the new European context, the Senior Advisers decided to enlarge the Bureau to seven members, endorsed the general orientation of document ENVWA/R.81 and requested the newly elected Bureau to prepare, with the assistance of the secretariat, a proposal for the restructured programme of work and revised terms of reference, for consideration by the heads of delegation at their consultation in autumn 1993 and subsequent submission to the Senior Advisers at their seventh session.

22. The Senior Advisers voiced their concern that the resources assigned to the Division were barely adequate for the existing programme of work. The current recruitment freeze has resulted in the need to postpone certain activities. The implementation of some ongoing programme activities has been conditional on the availability of secretariat resources. Moreover, no new work, including the country performance reviews mentioned above, can be undertaken unless additional secretariat resources are made available.

23. In accordance with the recommendation of the Working Group for the strengthening of the annual session of the Commission that the round of meetings of PSBs be completed by 31 December each year, the next session of the Senior Advisers has been tentatively scheduled for June 1994.

TRANSPORT (Sub-programme 2)

24. The fifty-fifth session of the Inland Transport Committee met from 1-5 February 1993. The provisional agenda and programme of work are contained in documents ECE/TRANS/96 and ECE/TRANS/97/Add.1 respectively. In order to take account of the recommendation of the Working Group for the strengthening of the annual session of the Commission that the reports of PSBs be submitted in time to the Ad Hoc Informal Meeting of the Commission, the fifty-sixth session of the Committee has been scheduled from 17-21 January 1994, subject to the approval of the Commission. The report of the Committee on its fifty-fifth session has been circulated in document ECE/TRANS/97.

25. In order to increase the efficiency of its work a Coordination Meeting of the Committee was set up in order to prepare the annual session of the Committee.

26. The main items dealt with by the last session of the Committee in implementation of the provisions of Commission decision F (47) include the revision of important transport agreements, work on infrastructure, road safety, assistance to countries in transition, follow-up to the Prague Conference, and environmental considerations.

27. Work on the revision of transport conventions and agreements focused on the AGR which will also take into account environmental considerations, the 1958 Agreement, the AETR, the elaboration of a number of customs agreements as well as preparatory work for the AGN.

28. Following the decision to align the European Regulations for the transport of dangerous goods by road (ADR) with those for rail (RID) and to achieve full harmonization of all modal rules with the UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, the activities of the bodies concerned and serviced by the ECE secretariat have intensified markedly. Intensive work will also be carried out in 1993 for the revision of the European Provisions of ADN and the development in 1994 of an ADN agreement. The importance of work in the field of transport of dangerous goods may also be seen by the declaration of intention of RID/ADR countries to apply RID/ADR in addition to international transport, also to national transport.

29. In the framework of the AGTC, standards for international combined transport using inland waterways transport were prepared and adopted in the form of a Resolution. Furthermore, work continues on regulations concerning the trans-shipment of dangerous goods in combined transport operations.

30. The organization of the global ECE Seminar on container dimensions and the substantive contributions made by the ECE Working Party on Combined Transport have shown the flexibility of the ECE in taking up emerging issues and in providing, at short notice, machinery for cooperative governmental action as well as a forum for the dialogue between governments and industry. The Resolution adopted by the Committee on the subject inter alia underlines the need to identify the benefits of a possible introduction of larger containers.

31. Administrative and technical problems at borders in international rail

transport are being analysed, and proposals for measures to eliminate them will be prepared.

32. Noting that conventions and agreements are some of the main outputs of the Committee, consideration has been given to ways and means of enabling governments, particularly those of new member States, to accede to these international legal instruments. In the field of road transport facilitation, the implementation of international instruments has been promoted with the help of ad hoc groups of experts.

33. The classification of European inland waterways, which is a prerequisite for the elaboration of an all-European agreement on inland waterway transport infrastructure, was adopted and a study on the establishment of a network of main inland waterways of international importance was launched.

34. Coordination of transport infrastructures of different modes of transport, as well as combined transport in all European Countries, was discussed. An appropriate organizational structure for carrying out such work will be considered.

35. New activities in cooperation with WHO, ILO, UNEP and OECD have also been initiated as a result of the adoption of Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 by UNCED.

36. Further cooperation has been established with ILO on the alleviation of hardship to road-transport drivers caught at frontier blockades. The Committee also adopted a Resolution concerning the improvement of traffic fluidity and prevention of hardship to drivers which may arise from traffic disruption.

37. The Committee was informed of the progress made in the TEM and TER projects, including new east-west connections, higher priority to combined transport and the status of trust funds which have been established to continue work, noting that UNDP funding has been discontinued.

38. A Resolution was adopted by the Committee on the organization of a second Road Safety Week to be held in 1995.

39. In respect of transition countries, the Committee endorsed a decision of the Working Party WP.5 concerning the establishment of an inventory regarding the reform process in central and east European countries related to changes under way in the regulatory and institutional field of transport. The Committee also noted the difficulty encountered in providing assistance to transition countries because of insufficient funds. This has hampered the secretariat's participation in workshops as well as that of representatives from transition and new member countries.

40. Shortage of staff due to the recruitment freeze has created difficulties in the field of the transport of dangerous goods and transport statistics. This has also had an impact on the capacity to provide assistance to countries in transition. The Committee requested that all vacant posts in the Transport Division be filled as soon as possible including the additional post provided in the area of the transport of dangerous goods.

41. As a follow-up to Agenda 21 adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, a proposal was made by the Government of Sweden indicating the importance of the convening in the ECE region of a regional Conference on Transport and the Environment and suggesting that ECE take the initiative of convening a preparatory Committee responsible for the preparation of the Conference. The Inland Transport Committee supported the Swedish proposal, provided the Commission would take positive steps towards the adoption of the principle of holding the Conference, after having studied its feasibility.

42. As a follow-up to ECOSOC decision 1991/74, ECE and ECA continue their joint work on the evaluation of studies made for the construction of a permanent link across the Strait of Gibraltar. However, since resolution 1992/45 insists that these activities not impose any financial burden on the budgets of the two commissions, and that existing priorities be respected, the secretariat is encountering difficulty in financing its contribution to this work.

43. Following recent political and economic changes in Europe and the subsequent Commission's deliberations and decisions at its resumed forty-fifth session, the Committee adopted a new version of its Terms of Reference.

44. The Committee decided that a proposal by the secretariat to elaborate a transport efficiency programme should be discussed by the next Coordination Meeting of the Committee.

STATISTICS (Sub-programme 3)

45. The Conference of European Statisticians held its fortieth session from 15-19 June 1992. It was attended, inter alia, by 38 ECE countries of which 35 were represented by the executive heads of national statistical offices. The report of the session is contained in document ECE/CES/40.

46. The Bureau and the Conference expressed satisfaction with the service provided by the "Steering Document" in enabling ECE countries to stay abreast of directions taken by the statistical system in transition countries, and approved proposals for evaluating the results of technical assistance.

47. The Bureau of the Conference, with the participation of the Statistical Directors of Eurostat and OECD, met from 26-27 October 1992 and again from 15-16 February 1993. It congratulated the secretariats on the improvement of coordination between the ECE, Eurostat and OECD work programmes through Joint Programme Review meetings. It agreed that as of the 1993 plenary session, the draft work programmes of the Conference, Eurostat and the OECD in all fields of statistics would be presented in an integrated manner in the same document, following the Conference format. Although the work programmes of Eurostat and the OECD would be presented for informational purposes only, the Bureau considered that an integrated presentation of the three work programmes should facilitate priority setting and lead to greater transparency and further improvements in coordination. The OECD will organize a half-day meeting during the week of the plenary session for OECD countries to review the OECD programme.

48. The Bureau also took note of the significant progress in the secretariat mechanism for better cooperation and coordination between the ECE, Eurostat and the OECD, and world-level organizations including the IMF, the World Bank and ILO (e.g. intersecretariat working groups in selected fields of statistics and annual joint programme review meetings). Despite the added cost occasioned by additional secretariat travel, the time allocated to such coordination has proved to be highly productive and has improved efficiency in the view of both the Bureau and the secretariat.

49. The findings of the Working Group which the Conference had established in response to decision O (45) to evaluate ECE statistical publications have been made available to all PSBs for comment. A member of the Statistical Division has participated in the PSB meetings in order to inform them of the outcome of the Conference's discussion on the findings of the Working Group and to introduce an ECE questionnaire designed to elicit their views. Replies from the PSBs and from individual delegates will be analysed and submitted to the Statistical Division for follow-up work. The Statistical Division, in consultation with other ECE divisions, has begun making some firm proposals in respect of a number of the ECE's 40 statistical publications. The Bureau of the Conference has prepared a progress report which will be made available to the forty-eighth session of the Commission.

50. The Bureau and the Conference expressed general satisfaction with the parts of the 1991/92 work programme which had been able to be implemented, but serious concern was voiced about the limited resources available to the priority area of statistics and the negative implications of vacancies in the Division on the implementation of the 1992/93 work programme. The Conference passed a strong Resolution on Secretariat Resources for submission to the Chairman of the Commission and transmission to the Secretary-General.

51. As a result of its concern about resource limitations, professional vacancies and the implications of increased membership in the ECE, the Conference suspended work planned for 1992/93 in designated fields and reduced its contribution to other activities. The 1992/93 meeting programme was similarly affected. This uncertainty also resulted in the Conference not attaching priority levels to programme elements in its programme of work for 1992/93. In addition, at its February 1993 meeting the Bureau of the Conference reluctantly decided that in the absence of the required additional resources, the work programme would have to be trimmed back at the 1993 plenary session so that work to be undertaken would generally match available resource levels in each part of the programme.

52. In response to Commission decision B (47) a new Director of the Statistical Division was appointed in October 1992 as an exception to the recruitment freeze. Two other professional posts have been filled during the freeze, and authorization has now been received to proceed with recruitment for the remaining three vacancies through the national competitive examinations.

53. Additional resources will be required to enable the Statistical Division to carry out its added responsibilities in developing improved coordination mechanisms for statistical work undertaken by the ECE, the EC and OECD, to provide stronger statistical support for the Commission's other priority areas

called for in decision O (45), including cross-sectoral activities, to collect and analyse statistics from new member States, and to assist and advise them, as necessary.

TRADE FACILITATION (Sub-programme 4)

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE (Sub-programme 7)

54. The Committee on the Development of Trade, whose mandate covers both the above sub-programmes, held its forty-first session from 8-10 December 1992. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/TRADE/184.

55. The Committee reviewed its programme of work and reformulated it under three main headings: trade facilitation, trade promotion and trade analysis.

56. The Committee held a further in-depth discussion of the ECE work on trade facilitation and in particular UN/EDIFACT. Questions were asked as to the resource requirements for work on trade facilitation, including the EDIFACT trust fund, and areas of possible overlap with the Trade Efficiency programme launched by UNCTAD. The secretariat proposal for a programme of assistance to the countries in transition in the field of trade facilitation was well received. Similarly the secretariat decision to establish an inter-secretariat task force between ECE, UNCTAD and ITC to ensure greater cooperation and coordination of work in this field was welcomed.

57. Trade facilitation is a priority sector of the Commission and additional resources have been redeployed to the Trade Facilitation Section. In spite of the freeze on recruitment, the posts of Chief of Section, EDIFACT administrator and a programmer, as well as one general service support staff have been filled this year. Personal computers have been provided to all the professional staff in the section.

58. The work of the Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures (WP.4) is progressing rapidly. UN/EDIFACT has recently shown a marked increase in the number of messages developed. 124 messages have currently been approved at various stages of development, and 40 more messages were accepted during last week's WP.4 session as new work items to be developed. A new EDIFACT Board is under establishment, i.e. an African EDIFACT Board with the appointment of an EDIFACT Rapporteur from that region, the other regional EDIFACT Boards being the Western European EDIFACT Board, Eastern European EDIFACT Board, Asian EDIFACT Board, Australia/New Zealand EDIFACT Board and the Pan American EDIFACT Board.

59. To govern the dynamic growth of the EDIFACT development, an EDIFACT Steering Group has been established. The objective of this group is to restructure and streamline the EDIFACT procedures to enhance the production of messages. The group has already taken several important initiatives to achieve its objective; for example, it is planned that four EDIFACT directories will be published in 1993.

60. Other important work items addressed by WP.4 include the "Analysis of the International Trade Transaction". This work is of special importance for countries in transition. It is felt that this type of analysis together with

modern data modelling techniques gives countries in transition a tool with which to develop efficient trade procedures in order to be more competitive in western markets.

61. WP.4 is active in the legal field with a comprehensive work programme. Recently, contacts with UNCITRAL have been intensified and synergy effects are expected from this cooperation. At last week's session the legal team also concluded the revision of UN/ECE Recommendation No. 12, "Measures to Facilitate Maritime Transport Document Procedures".

62. To make the general debate more attractive, the Committee on the Development of Trade decided to select a discussion theme for each session on which delegations should concentrate their statements. The theme selected for the 1993 session is "The impact of trade facilitation on trade in the ECE region". The Bureau will play a more active role between sessions, and the secretariat will prepare discussion papers on the selected theme. In addition, a round-table will be organized on the same subject in consultation with the Bureau. Also, representatives of the Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures (WP.4) and its Groups of Experts will be invited to participate in the round-table.

63. Pursuant to Commission decision D (47), the Committee decided that the secretariat prepare a study analysing successful measures as well as negative experiences of the European countries in the field of privatization.

64. The secretariat was also requested to prepare a study on the establishment of conditions conducive to expanding trade among economies in transition.

65. Three workshops will be organized in 1993 in countries in transition. One will deal with the issue of promotion of foreign direct investment and will be held in Ljubljana (Slovenia). A second is expected to be on the subject of "Progress in the reform of foreign trade and payments in countries in transition", and tentatively scheduled in Tirana (Albania); and a third on the "Implication of privatization, including the role of SMEs, for international trade and investment" to be convened in a place yet to be decided. The secretariat was also requested to continue its work on information sources relevant to trade and investment activities in the economies in transition and needed by business operators. This subject was particularly stressed in the Helsinki Document 1992.

66. The Committee, aware of the important work being carried out by the Working Party on International Contract Practices in Industry, agreed that it should meet once in 1993 to enable it to complete the drafting of its new guide (on the financing of east-west trade/privatization in central and eastern Europe) by the forty-second session of the Committee to be held in December 1993. It requested the Working Party to make proposals on its future activities to the forty-second session of the Committee.

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS (Sub-programme 5)

67. The Senior Economic Advisers to ECE Governments held their twenty-eighth

session from 1-5 June 1992. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/EC.AD/40.

68. In the context of the annual meeting of the Senior Economic Advisers the secretariat has also organized a round-table to which outside experts are invited to discuss a topic concerning the transition process in the eastern countries. The proceedings of the first three round-tables have been published in the ECE's Discussion Papers series.

69. The Senior Economic Advisers have recently concentrated their work on subjects of major importance for the region suggested by individual Senior Economic Advisers and subsequently adopted by the Bureau. In 1992 the subjects focused on were (a) the economic slowdown in the market economies, and (b) restructuring of public enterprises and privatization: western experience and development in the transition countries. Thanks to an in-depth discussion during the session and inputs from the secretariat, the Senior Economic Advisers produced a number of substantive recommendations on both subjects which were reflected in the report of the twenty-eighth session.

70. Although the Senior Economic Advisers have so far organized only a few workshops on transition, the division has contributed to several organized by other PSBs. In addition to a lack of secretariat resources, another reason for the small number of workshops organized by the Senior Economic Advisers has been the very scarce resources of the transition countries themselves. To facilitate the holding of meetings under their auspices, the Senior Economic Advisers agreed at their last session that informal meetings were the best way to address some of the problems included in their work programme, as advocated by decision O (45). However, this raises the issue of language services required for such meetings.

71. The activities of the Joint Working Group on Environment and Economics, held under the auspices of the Senior Economic Advisers and the Senior Advisers on Environmental and Water Problems, provides an excellent example of a cross-sectoral approach. Experts representing these two fields of activity consider a number of issues related to various aspects of sustainable economic development, such as the assessment of the situation in the economies in transition, the impact of economic restructuring on the environment, various costing techniques for environmental policies and the use of economic instruments for further environmental goals. The third session of the Joint Working Group met on 19-21 January 1993. Other PSBs such as the Committee on Energy might be associated on an ad hoc basis with the Joint Working Group on Environment and Economics.

ENERGY (Sub-programmme 6)

72. The Committee on Energy held its second session from 10-12 November 1992. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/ENERGY/21.

73. The Committee noted that since negotiations on the basic agreement on the implementation of the European Energy Charter had yet to be completed, it was premature to define a precise ECE role. The Committee considered its earlier list of items for cooperation still valid, namely (a) energy efficiency, (b) gas and electric power interconnections and (c) techniques for clean

combustion of coal. The Commission at its Ad Hoc Informal Meeting on 5 October requested the secretariat to prepare a paper on its possible cooperation in implementing the European Energy Charter taking into account the proposal to establish a network secretariat. The paper has been circulated to delegations for the Ad Hoc Informal Meeting held on 25 January.

74. The Committee also welcomed the innovative paper prepared by the secretariat on Multilateral Assistance to Economies in Transition in the Field of Energy (ENERGY/R.76). It also expressed appreciation for the work done on workshops to assist countries in transition for which the energy sector was of great importance, as contained in the document submitted to the Committee.

75. The Committee approved the reports of the Steering Committee on the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project and requested governments which had not already pledged contributions to the Project Trust Fund to do so. It also asked them to endorse the initiative of central, eastern and southern ECE member States to work more extensively on energy-efficiency demonstration zones. The cooperation provided by the Committee on Human Settlements in this work was welcomed.

76. The Committee approved the proposed Global Energy Efficiency 21 Project, and recommended its endorsement by the Commission at its forty-eighth session. It called on the secretariat to continue the further preparation of the project which it judged to be an important interregional contribution to implementing Agenda 21, approved by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

77. The Committee referred the questionnaire on the evaluation of statistical publications in the energy field for written reply, as it had been tabled during the session and in one language only. It approved the request of its Working Party on Coal that the preparation and publication of the ECE Annual Bulletin of Coal Statistics be continued. A similar request was made by the Working Party on Gas, which met after the second session of the Committee (25-27 January 1993). The Working Party on Electric Power has not yet met.

78. The Committee asked the Executive Secretary and the Commission to give the necessary attention and resources to its programme, especially those activities designed to assist the economies in transition. It noted that the secretariat had attained a high degree of programme implementation despite difficult circumstances resulting from the redeployment of staff to priority areas of work in response to decision O (45) and also to unfilled professional posts during the recruitment freeze. It noted that a meeting on Renewable Sources of Energy and the publication of two seminar proceedings and of two studies had been postponed due to the lack of staff resources.

INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY (Sub-programme 8)

79. (a) The twentieth session of the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Science and Technology was held from 23-25 September 1992 in accordance with decision O (45). The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/SC.TECH/44. The twenty-first session of the Senior Advisers will take place in September 1994.

80. Several delegations at the session appreciated the marked change which was taking place in the perception of the usefulness of the Senior Advisers and expressed their readiness for a new, constructive dialogue.

81. The Senior Advisers noted the importance of reliable science and technology statistical data and attached particular importance to the work which was to be undertaken in close cooperation with OECD on the development of science and technology indicators for the countries of central and eastern Europe. At the same time they recognized the difficulties which the provision of such statistical data might pose for those countries. The Commission might encourage the authorities in western Europe and North America to provide the necessary assistance in order to establish comparative science and technology indicators for the economies in transition. The Senior Advisers also noted the importance of involving the Conference of European Statisticians in all work related to the development of these indicators and in organizing workshops in the countries of central and eastern Europe.

82. The Commission should also encourage the Commission of the European Communities and OECD to cooperate in organizing the Seminar on State Policy in Economies in Transition Aimed at Promoting Innovation, to be held in Poland in 1993.

83. There is a need to raise the visibility of the work of the Senior Advisers in national capitals and to explain the different roles which they can play in contributing to the process of reform in the economies in transition.

84. (b) The second session of the Working Party on Steel was held from 21-23 October 1992. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/STEEL/80.

85. The Working Party has reorganized its work to concentrate on three basic areas of activity, namely the management of the evolution of the steel industry, questions of interest to countries in transition, and the protection of the environment. Delegations stressed the importance of the timely collection and dissemination of statistics since they were the basis of all substantive work.

86. Countries outside the region such as Brazil, China, Japan, Mexico and South Korea, as well as representatives of industry, continue to participate in the work of the Working Party.

87. Scope exists for closer cooperation with bodies such as the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Environmental and Water Problems and the Committee on Energy in implementing programme elements under programme activity on environmental and resource issues in the iron and steel industry, and possibly with the Conference of European Statisticians on the development of steel statistics.

88. Cooperation with other relevant organizations, in particular the Commission of the European Communities, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is active.

89. Implementation of the programme of work of the Working Party will be seriously affected during 1993 if the freeze on professional recruitment continues, since one of the two professional posts in the Steel Section will become vacant during 1993. In noting the lack of secretariat resources for the work of the Working Party, delegates underlined the need for assistance from industry. Note was taken of the contribution of Japanese industry, which has made an expert available to the secretariat for a period of two years.

90. (c) The second session of the Working Party on the Chemical Industry was held from 7-9 October 1992. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/CHEM/86.

91. The Working Party "took note with interest of the initiative of the delegation of Poland to submit a draft decision on cooperation and sustainable industrial development ... for adoption [by the Commission] at its forty-eighth session". Most delegations welcomed this initiative, but some reserved their positions.

92. Considerable scope exists in the implementation of the programme of work of the Working Party for closer cooperation with the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Environmental and Water Problems on sustainable development in the chemical industry and, in particular, the elaboration of a project proposal on the establishment in Poland of a Regional Environmental Management Centre for the Chemical Industry, the environmental clean-up of selected chemical production sites, and waste treatment in industrial parks. Similar close cooperation is envisaged with the Conference of European Statisticians on the development of internationally comparable statistics, including those for specialized products.

93. Close cooperation has been established with the Commission of the European Communities and the European Chemical Industry Federation. A study on legislation affecting the chemical industry in countries of the ECE region will be undertaken jointly by the UN/ECE and the EC. Possibilities exist to establish closer cooperation with organizations such as UNEP, OECD and EBRD as well as with financial institutions on issues taken up by the High-Level Meeting on Cooperation and Sustainable Development in the Chemical Industry and, in particular, its follow-up process entitled "Chemical Industry - Sustainable Economic and Ecological Development" (CHEMISEED).

94. There have been delays in implementing the programme of work because of the freeze on professional recruitment. At the present time this affects the programme element "Market trends and outlook for selected chemical products". As a result the five-year survey will be issued later than expected, and without a statistical annex. The programme of work may also be seriously affected in 1993 if staffing shortages continue, noting that one of the two professional posts in the Chemical Industry Section has been vacant for an extended period of time.

95. (d) The twelfth session of the Working Party on Engineering Industries and Automation was held from 24 to 26 February 1993. Sixteen countries participated in the meeting. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/ENG.AUT/51.

96. The Working Party requested the Commission to allow it to hold its thirteenth session from 31 October to 2 November 1994 in conjunction with the sixteenth Meeting on Questions of Statistics concerning Engineering Industries and Automation and the PRODCOM Workshop. The Working Party took note of a draft decision submitted by the delegation of the Russian Federation on the identification of funds for industrial projects in countries in transition and agreed to its being annexed to the report of the twelfth session.

97. Opportunities for cooperation with international organizations are being fully exploited, in particular with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, which is cooperating in the organization of the Seminar on Foundry Production and Ecology to be held in Minsk, Belarus, in May 1993, and with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on the development of internationally comparable engineering statistics. Further close working contacts are also being maintained with the Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization and the International Federation for Medical and Biological Engineering on the implementation of the results of the REHAB Workshops in the economies in transition, as well as with other international organizations, such as the International Electrotechnical Commission, the International Organization for Standardization and the International Federation of Robotics.

98. In addition to the activities mentioned above, the Working Party agreed to cosponsor a workshop to be held in conjunction with the electric vehicles rally in Krasnodar (Russian Federation) in August 1993, and to organize workshops to be held in 1994 on industrial robotics in Budapest and in 1995 on economic aspects of the implementation of new technologies in small and medium-sized enterprises in the Russian Federation.

99. (e) The second session of the Working Party on Standardization Policies was held from 12-14 May 1992. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/STAND/36.

100. Delegations noted the importance of the Commission's work in the field of standardization policies, especially in the countries in transition to a market economy. Their integration into the European and global economy will depend to a considerable extent upon their ability to meet international standards.

101. In 1992 the Working Party conducted five transition workshops dealing specifically with technical barriers to trade and conformity assessment, four of which were held in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic and one in Bulgaria. Further workshops, to be held in 1993, are under preparation at the invitation of the Governments of Cyprus, Israel and Croatia.

102. Scope exists in the future for closer cooperation with bodies such as the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Environmental and Water Problems and the Committee on Energy in developing environmental and energy policies, standards and labelling systems.

103. Opportunities for cooperation with other relevant organizations, in particular the International Organization of Legal Metrology, the International Electrotechnical Commission, the International Organization for

Standardization and the European Organization for Testing and Certification, are being fully exploited.

AGRICULTURE AND TIMBER (Sub-programme 9)

104. (a) The Timber Committee held its fiftieth session from 20-23 October 1992. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/TIM/63.

105. The major change in the structure of the Committee's programme of work, in response to decision O (45), was made at its previous session. At the fiftieth session the process was one of consolidation, but with still further emphasis being put on activities in support of countries in transition. The Committee agreed on the methodology for treating the countries in transition in the next study of long-term timber trends and prospects in Europe (ETTS V).

106. In adopting its programme of work for 1993-97, the Committee agreed on activities in support of the countries in transition, on setting up teams of specialists on the effects of nuclear radiation on forests and forest industries, wood and energy and public relations in the forestry and forest industry sector.

107. On several occasions delegations have expressed their satisfaction with the cooperation between the Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission, pointing out the complementarity of their programmes and the avoidance of duplication. It should be noted that the Committee's work concentrates on the supply, industrial conversion, trade and utilization of forest products and that of the European Forestry Commission on the management and policy aspects of forests and forestry. Very close cooperation exists where there is mutuality of interests. There are two joint subsidiary bodies, and in addition many activities are undertaken jointly. Joint sessions are held at intervals when major topics of mutual interest are to be discussed. Cooperation also occurs with the International Labour Organisation which is a joint sponsor of one subsidiary body, the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training. Working relations have also been established with the Commission of the European Communities.

108. The Committee has made a major input to the Global Forest Resource Assessment 1990, for which FAO has primary responsibility, but the Timber Committee, jointly with the EFC, has been responsible for the part covering the developed temperate-zone regions, including countries that are not members of ECE.

109. The Committee reiterated the view that its publications were an invaluable, and often unique, source of information on the forest and forest products sector. It has rank-ordered the collection and publication of statistics as third among its priorities. An ad hoc meeting was held in February 1993 which issued recommendations to improve the collection and dissemination of forest and forest-products statistics, to be examined by the Joint FAO/ECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics in June 1993, and aimed at maintaining the position of the Committee as the primary provider, in close cooperation with FAO, of statistics on forestry and forest products at an international level. The Committee noted the work being undertaken by the Conference of European Statisticians to evaluate statistical

publications, and expressed the hope that its own views on the importance of its publications would be taken fully into account by the Commission.

110. The Committee was informed that its Bureau had discussed with the Chairman of the Commission the lack of sufficient meeting-time in formal sessions; an additional half day of formal session was considered desirable. It was also noted that the use of informal meetings without language services created problems since the Committee's work was to a considerable extent highly specialized and technical and could not be discussed by a number of delegates in one language only. This was particularly the case for new member States. The Committee also gave its full support to the request of the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training that interpretation facilities should be provided for five half-day sessions instead of four as provided for in decision O (45). The Joint Committee meets at two-yearly intervals. Likewise, two ad hoc meetings in the context of the European Long-term Timber Trends Study (ETTS V) will have a heavy agenda requiring detailed technical discussion on (a) review and analysis of the policy context (scheduled for spring 1994) and (b) review of the full draft of ETTS V (scheduled for late 1994/early 1995). It is estimated that a fruitful outcome of these two meetings will require eight formal sessions each for a satisfactory coverage of the issues.

111. The Committee noted that due to temporary staff shortages a number of activities scheduled for 1992 had had to be postponed, including two ad hoc meetings and certain preparatory work on the study of long-term timber trends and prospects (ETTS V). However, the very active support of member countries to this area of work was witnessed by loan of experts and funds to carry out parts of ETTS V. Paucity of resources also led to activities in support of countries in transition developing more slowly than had been foreseen.

112. (b) The Committee on Agriculture held its forty-fourth session from 8-10 March 1993. In accordance with the recommendation of the Working Group for the strengthening of the annual session of the Commission, the Committee's next session has been tentatively scheduled for 16-20 May 1994.

113. At its last session in March 1992 the Committee adopted a decision on the role of international, harmonized, commercial standards wherein the Committee presented to the Commission a request regarding the cooperation between the ECE Committee on Agriculture and the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission. As requested by the Committee, the Bureau played a more active role, notably in the preparation of the Committee's session. In addition to a Bureau meeting (August 1992), there was a joint meeting of the Bureau with the Executive Committee of the FAO European Commission on Agriculture (November 1992).

114. For the Committee, as part of its restructuring exercise called for by decision O (45), a major recent event in the cooperation with FAO was the acceptance by the FAO Council in November 1992 of the offer made by the Committee, and endorsed by the Commission, to establish as joint ECE/FAO bodies two new working parties: the Working Party on Economics of the Agri-Food Sector and Farm Management, and the Working Party on Relations between Agriculture and the Environment.

115. A special topic for discussion at the Committee's next session was chosen, namely the examination of recent developments and outlook for agriculture and agricultural policies in the European region, in particular in the countries in transition with emphasis on state price and support policies in the agri-food sector and the role of professional organizations. The Committee's workshops for countries in transition have addressed farm restructuring, food standards and quality control, and statistics. As regards assistance to countries in transition in the field of agriculture, the coordination of ECE and FAO activities will be examined at a joint meeting of the Committee's Bureau with the Executive Committee of FAO/ECA (July 1993).

116. In order to devote more time of allocated formal sessions to substantive discussions the Committee restructured its annual session and concentrated more on a selected topical item. With that aim also, instead of the full report being adopted at the closing session, the Committee adopted on an experimental basis a brief text containing the conclusions, decisions and possible recommendations. The full report was prepared immediately after the session by the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau.

117. As the restrictions of meetimg-time with interpretation had seriously affected the quality of the two new ECE/FAO Working Parties, the Committee requested the Commission to allocate to them, for their regular sessions, six half meeting days with interpretation instead of four.

118. The Committee agreed to cancel the publication of Volume I of the Annual Review of the Agricultural Situation in Europe.

119. For the whole of 1992 the FAO-funded post of Chief of the Agriculture Section was vacant (under recruitment), which reduced the professional resources for the Committee's work by more than 15% and caused some activities to be reduced or postponed.

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (Sub-programme 10)

120. The Committee on Human Settlements held its fifty-third session from 15-17 September 1992 in Lisbon at the invitation of the Government of Portugal. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/HBP/86.

121. The Committee re-evaluated and restructured its methods and programme of work on the basis of two consultations among heads of delegations and the responses to a questionnaire circulated to member countries. As a result the Committee agreed to streamline its work so that all the programme elements focus on two basic strategic objectives, namely promoting sustainable development and assisting the transition process. The number of elements was condensed from 17 to 9.

122. Accordingly it decided to discontinue the former three Working Parties and set up two new Working Parties, one on Housing Modernization and Management and the other on Sustainable Human Settlements Planning. The exact titles and terms of reference, as well as the continuation of their work, will be reviewed by the Committee every three years.

123. Stressing the necessity of annual sessions for the Working Parties, the

Committee decided to request the Commission to allow such a procedure (taking into account the reduction of the number of subsidiary bodies, the total number of meeting-days would thus remain unchanged).

124. The Bureau was enlarged to consist of a Chairperson and four Vice-Chairpersons to reflect the new plurality of interests in the region, and its functions were strengthened.

125. The Committee endorsed its new Terms of Reference and submitted them to the Commission for adoption.

126. Delegations expressed support for the Committee's continuing programme of workshops, noting that 8 had already been held and that 10 more were being planned. They concluded that the holding of workshops was an efficient way of addressing urgent needs of countries in transition.

127. The Committee agreed to cooperate with the ECE Committee on Energy within the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project. Financial assistance from the Trust Fund on Human Settlements will be provided to cover half of the costs of an expert to work for one year on Energy Efficiency Demonstrations Zones.

128. The Committee is ready to cooperate with other relevant ECE subsidiary bodies in the implementation of Agenda 21 adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), as it declared the promotion of sustainable development one of its two basic strategic objectives. Note is taken of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its forth-seventh session which calls for a contribution by the regional commissions.

129. At its next session the Committee will be required to consider the provisions of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session on the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). The Conference will be convened from 3 to 14 June 1996 in Turkey. The preparatory committee for the Conference held its organizational session in March 1993 in New York. The ECE secretariat participated in the meeting. The committee decided to organize its first regular session in April 1994 in Geneva. It invited regional organizations to participate actively in the preparatory process and to hold preparatory meetings in cooperation with the regional commissions.

130. With only three professionals servicing the Committee, resources provided by governments both in kind and in cash has made possible the implementation of the Committee's programme of work. During the past year 14 seminars/ workshops were organized, from September 1991 until the end of 1992, in addition to formal meetings in Geneva.

131. The Committee expressed concern at the difficulties experienced by new member countries in attending its meetings and particpating in its work. The Bureau discussed measures to facilitate their participation in meetings of the Committee.

132. The Committee decided, on a trial basis, to discontinue adoption of the report of its annual meetings at the end of the session. Instead the report will be formally adopted at the beginning of the next meeting.